

Community Involvement Plan – Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Site
EPA Region 8
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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Superfund Community Involvement Program is committed to promoting communications between the public and the Agency.

Active public involvement is crucial to the success of any public project.

EPA's community involvement activities at the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Plant site near Columbia Falls, Montana, are designed to:

- Inform the public of the nature of the environmental issues associated with the site.
- Involve the public in the decision-making process that will affect them.
- Involve the public in the responses under consideration to remedy these issues.
- Respond to and incorporate the public's feedback as part of the decision-making process.
- Keep the public well informed of site activities, progress and milestones.

Introduction

EPA has developed this *Community Involvement Plan* to facilitate the ongoing exchange of information among all stakeholders regarding the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) Plant site (“the Site”) and encourage community involvement in site activities.

This *Community Involvement Plan*:

- Reviews the Site’s history and status (Section 2).
- Summarizes key community information (Sections 3 and 4).
- Presents EPA’s community involvement program for the Site (Section 5).
- Shares more information on the Superfund process (Section 6).
- Provides a complete listing of available resources (Appendices).

EPA drew on several information sources to develop this plan, including community interviews, site files, and meetings of the CFAC Community Liaison Panel in 2015 and 2016. EPA’s Region 8 regional office will oversee the implementation of the community involvement activities outlined in this plan.

EPA also requested the assistance of EPA’s Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program during the CIP interview process.

Section 2: Site Background and History

Site Description

The Site is located at 2000 Aluminum Drive, two miles northeast of Columbia Falls in Flathead County, Montana.

[site context map here](#)

A primary aluminum reduction facility was active on site from 1955 to 2009. The facility’s permanent closure was announced in March 2015. The Site covers about 960 acres, and is bounded by Cedar Creek Reservoir to the north, Teakettle Mountain to the east, Flathead River to the south and Cedar Creek to the west. The Flathead River is a fishery that includes the federally designated threatened bull trout and the federally sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The Site’s total property area covers about 3,196 acres. The remainder of the site property is located south of Flathead River. It was never used for industrial operations.

[site location and features map here](#)

Buildings and industrial facilities currently on site include offices, warehouses, laboratories, mechanical shops, paste plant, coal tar pitch tanks, pump houses, a casting garage and a potline facility. The Site also includes seven closed landfills, an active landfill, material loading and unloading areas, two closed leachate ponds, and several wastewater percolation ponds. A rectifier yard and switchyard owned by Bonneville Power Administration and a right-of-way for

the Burlington Northern Railroad are also within the Site's boundaries.

The Site is located in a rural setting. The nearest residences are located adjacent to the Site's southwest boundary, about 0.80 miles west of the historic footprint of site operations, in a neighborhood referred to as Aluminum City. The City of Columbia Falls anticipates that land uses in this area will not change rapidly in the foreseeable future.

Site History

Prior to the Site's industrial development in the 1950s, land uses in the area were residential and agricultural. Anaconda Copper Mining Company purchased the property in 1951 and built the aluminum reduction facility. In 1985, CFAC bought the plant from Atlantic Richfield Company, which had acquired the facility from the plant's original owner in 1977. Glencore, a Switzerland-based company, acquired CFAC in 1999 and announced the facility's permanent closure in 2015.

Facility operations generated significant quantities of spent potliner material, a federally listed hazardous waste, as a byproduct of the aluminum smelting process. Contaminants detected at the Site include cyanide, fluoride and metals, including arsenic, chromium, lead and selenium. These contaminants are present in soils, surface ponds and groundwater at the Site and pose a risk to nearby wells and the Flathead River.

Current Status

EPA and the State of Montana have determined that a comprehensive investigation of the Site is necessary to inform effective cleanup actions to address these risks. EPA proposed adding the Site to the National Priorities List in March 2015, making it eligible for additional study and cleanup resources under the Superfund program. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the country's most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites to protect public health and the environment. The program was established by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA).

EPA finalized the Site's listing on the National Priorities List on September 9, 2016. The City of Columbia Falls supported the listing of the Site and Montana Governor Steve Bullock concurred. Senator Jon Tester and many community organizations also expressed their support. EPA carefully evaluated all public comments received on the proposed listing before making a final decision.

In November 2015, EPA signed a final agreement with CFAC to investigate site contamination. Under the terms of the agreement, CFAC is conducting a comprehensive investigation of soils, river sediments, and ground and surface water to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the Site. All work is approved and overseen by EPA and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Montana DEQ). The results of the investigation – known as the Site's remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) – will determine cleanup needs and identify potential cleanup options at the Site.

Community Involvement

EPA Region 8, in conjunction with Montana DEQ, has conducted community relations activities throughout site activities to date. Community outreach activities have included public availability sessions and public meetings, issuance of fact sheets, publication of public notices in the *Daily Inter Lake* and *Flathead Beacon* newspapers and *Hungry Horse News*, and maintenance of an information repository at the Columbia Falls branch of the ImagineIF library system.

The CFAC Community Liaison Panel (CLP) serves as a forum for open discussion among members of the greater Columbia Falls community and representatives of CFAC and Glencore. CFAC is owned by Glencore, a Switzerland-based company. Glencore hired Ann Green Communications to select the CFAC CLP's membership and facilitate its meetings.

The CFAC CLP has met on a regular basis since May 2015. Members represent various interests and serve as a cross-section of the Columbia Falls and Flathead County community. Those serving include neighbors, business leaders, health care and education professionals, faith community representatives, environmental advocates, and local, state and federal elected officials. EPA and Montana DEQ staff provide updates and serve as information resources at CFAC CLP meetings. Company representatives from CFAC and Glencore participate as well.

Environmental Justice

Helping healthy, sustainable and equitable communities is a priority of the federal government. Making a visible difference in communities for all Americans is one of EPA's top priorities. Every day, Region 8 works to improve the health of American families and protect the environment.

Environmental justice plays a key role in an integrated effort that addresses housing, environment, transportation and health issues. Everyone deserves the opportunity to live, work, play and learn in a clean, healthy environment. Low-income, minority and tribal communities are often overburdened by pollution and face disproportionate human health impacts, greater obstacles to economic prosperity and increased vulnerability to climate change.

EPA Region 8 programs collaborate closely to make sure minority, low income and tribal communities facing disproportionate environmental risks have opportunities for meaningful participation in environmental decision-making. Region 8 also coordinates closely with EPA headquarters and states to support initiatives that provide all people living near Superfund sites with technical assistance, training opportunities and other services.

Section 3: Community Profile

Columbia Falls and Flathead County are part of northwest Montana's Flathead Valley, which lies between Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. Surrounded by more than two million acres of the Flathead National Forest and with the Flathead River flowing through the community, Columbia Falls is known as the gateway to Glacier National Park.

Land Use and Demographics

Flathead County encompasses 5,098 square miles. About 94 percent of the land area is national or state forest land, wilderness, farmland, or forest. Developed areas make up the remaining 6 percent of the county. In addition to Columbia Falls, other major population centers in the county include Kalispell and Whitefish.

As shown in the table below, the county and its population centers have experienced significant and sustained population growth since 2000. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Montana.

| Flathead County | | Columbia Falls | | Kalispell | | Whitefish | |
|--|--------|----------------|-------|------------|--------|------------|-------|
| Population | | Population | | Population | | Population | |
| 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 |
| 74,471 | 90,928 | 3,873 | 4,688 | 15,184 | 19,927 | 5,629 | 6,357 |
| Population Change (2000-2010) | | | | | | | |
| 22% | | 21% | | 31% | | 13% | |
| Current Population (2015 estimates) | | | | | | | |
| 96,155 | | | | 22,052 | | 7,073 | |
| Notes: The 2000 and 2010 data are from the U.S. Census decennial surveys. The 2015 population numbers are estimates from the U.S. Census. | | | | | | | |

The City of Columbia Falls covers 923 acres – 1.3 square miles – and is bounded by the Flathead River to the east and south and by Burlington Northern railroad tracks to the north. The original town was laid out in the 1890s, incorporated in 1909, and developed as a trade- and transportation-related settlement.¹ The community is located about eight miles from Whitefish and 15 miles from Kalispell. State Highway 40 and U.S. Highway 2 connect the three cities.

Text Box Option

Local and Tribal Government Overview

Flathead County

A County Commission serves as the county's executive and legislative branch. The Commission consists of three elected at-large commissioners. In addition, Flathead County has eight elected officials representing various branches of government. Elected offices include the Sheriff, Clerk and Recorder, Treasurer, County Attorney, Clerk of Court, two Justice Court Justices of the Peace, and the Superintendent of Schools.

Mission Statement

"We provide responsive and accountable services to protect and enhance the Flathead community."

¹ Source: *Columbia Falls Master Plan*, 2000. Accessed at https://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning/documents/ColumbiaFallsCity-CountyMasterPlan.pdf.

City of Columbia Falls

The City has a commission-manager form of government. Elected officials include a Mayor and a six-member City Council. The City Manager is the day-to-day manager of city business and activities.

Mission Statement

“To foster a community that appeals to individuals, families, businesses and investors. Columbia Falls is a city that encourages individual rights and responsibilities, promotes aesthetics and recreation, and provides safety and security. By listening to its citizens and responding to their needs, by respecting diversity and differences of opinion, and by evaluating the status quo and practicing thoughtful planning, the city provides excellent value at reasonable cost.”

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

The Flathead Indian Reservation has land located in Flathead County. The Reservation is home to the Bitterroot Salish, upper Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes – also known as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation. A total of 28,296 acres of reservation land are located in Flathead County – the entire reservation covers more than 1.2 million acres. Headquartered in Pablo, Montana, the Flathead Indian Reservation is governed by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Council, which consists of 10 elected councilmen.

Blackfeet Nation

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is located in northwest Montana. The entire reservation spans about 1.5 million acres. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council is the governing body of the Blackfeet Nation and is responsible for exercising all powers of government under the Blackfeet Constitution and Bylaws. The Council consists of nine members from four districts who are elected by tribal members to serve four-year terms.

Sources

City of Columbia Falls: <http://cityofcolumbiafalls.org>

Flathead County: https://flathead.mt.gov/about_flathead_county/values.php

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes: <http://tribalnations.mt.gov/eskt>

Blackfeet Nation: <http://blackfeetnation.com>

Historically, the area's economy has been based on industry and natural resources – logging, mining, agriculture and commodities production. Over time, the local economy has diversified, experiencing significant growth in the retail trade and service industries as well as construction and health care. Current economic drivers for Columbia Falls and Flathead County include its natural resources and related recreation and tourism opportunities. A large percentage of new residents are retirees and middle-aged professionals.²

The table below lists additional demographic information for Columbia Falls and Flathead County, with national averages provided for comparison purposes.

| Race and Origin | | | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | White | Black / African-American | American Indian | Asian |
| Columbia Falls | 94.4% | 0.2% | 1.8% | 0.4% |
| Flathead County | 95.5% | 0.2% | 1.1% | 0.6% |
| United States | 72.4% | 12.6% | 0.9% | 4.8% |
| | | | | |
| Education | | | | |
| High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years ⁺ , 2010-2014 | | | | |
| Columbia Falls | 90.7% | | | |
| Flathead County | 93.6% | | | |
| United States | 86.3% | | | |
| | | | | |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years ⁺ , 2010-2014 | | | | |
| Columbia Falls | 18.4% | | | |
| Flathead County | 28.1% | | | |
| United States | 29.3% | | | |
| | | | | |
| Income | | | | |
| Median household income (in 2014 dollars), 2010-2014 | | | | |
| Columbia Falls | \$45,393 | | | |
| Flathead County | \$46,858 | | | |
| United States | \$53,482 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Persons in poverty, percent | | | | |
| Columbia Falls | 12.5% | | | |
| Flathead County | 13.6% | | | |
| United States | 14.8% | | | |
| | | | | |
| Notes: All table data from the U.S. Census, accessed at http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/30029,3016600,00 . | | | | |

Current Community Conditions, Issues and Opportunities

Community findings in this *Community Involvement Plan* are based primarily on the project interviews conducted in June 2016, which are summarized in the next section. Project research also included review of available community documents. Flathead County's *Growth Policy*, last updated in 2012, included extensive public outreach and assessment of county-wide goals and priorities. The findings highlight a community in transition, seeking to balance recognition, conservation and use of historical and natural resources with economic expansion and sustained population growth. Example policies from the report are provided below; the Site was not

² Source: *Flathead County Growth Policy*, 2012. Accessed at https://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning.

specifically referenced.³

Text Box Option

Flathead County *Growth Policy* Goals and Priorities

- Encourage development that respects the rural character of the county.
- Promote and respect local culture, heritage and history.
- Enhance conservation of working farms and ranches as well as clean water and key wildlife habitat.
- Identify open spaces that serve a critical role in public and environmental health, safety and general welfare.
- Create an affordable housing plan.
- Preserve and increase recreational access to public lands and waterways.
- Enhance a sustainable agricultural and timber industry.
- Foster business development as well as education and workforce development programs.
- Identify and prioritize infrastructure and transportation needs, including a bicycle path network.
- Preserve the county's natural amenities.

CFAC's April 2015 *Community Assessment Report* is a second study of site-specific interest.⁴ Consultants interviewed community leaders – elected officials, neighbors, business leaders, emergency response officials, former employees, environmental advocates and other site stakeholders. Focus areas included issues of importance to the community, local perceptions of industry and CFAC, and suggestions for CFAC's community outreach approach as part of its site responsibilities. A brief summary of relevant report findings is provided below.

General Community Concerns

- Need for sustainable economic development and quality jobs.
- Decline of industrial employers such as CFAC.
- Rapid population growth in the region.
- Valuing the area's environmental resources and quality of life.

Community Perceptions of Industry

³ Source: Appendix B, *Flathead County Growth Policy*, 2012. Accessed at https://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning.

⁴ *Community Assessment Report for Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC)*, April 2015. Ann Green Communications, Inc.

- Long-time residents emphasized the importance of industry as employers and corporate citizens.
- Newer arrivals highlighted concerns about industry's environmental impacts.

Community Perspectives on the Site

- CFAC as a valued long-time employer, neighbor and community supporter.
- Community-wide disappointment and concern at facility's closure.
- Emphasis on site cleanup and protection of public health and community water supplies.
- Concern about potential Superfund site stigma.
- Concerns about site contamination's potential health and environmental impacts.
- Interest in adaptive reuse of the area and its infrastructure after cleanup.
- Importance of keeping the community up to date during each step of the cleanup process.
- Interest in establishing a community group to make sure people have a voice in the cleanup process.

Section 4: Community Involvement Plan Interviews

Community interviews took place in Columbia Falls, Montana, from June 14 to June 16, 2016. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information and identify key community considerations to inform the *Community Involvement Plan* and future community involvement activities for the Site.

All interviewees were familiar with the Site. Many community members shared stories about working at the facility as well living nearby, stories about friends' and family members' experiences at the facility, and stories about the facility's role as a major employer in the community for many years.

All interviewees shared the concern that site cleanup be thorough, protective, lasting and timely. While community members expressed frustration at the multi-year duration of site investigation and sampling activities, most welcomed EPA's efforts at the Site. Many expressed concern about potential impacts and benefits of Superfund listing. Most welcomed EPA and MDEQ's involvement as well as the involvement of other state and local government agencies such as the Montana Department of Health & Public Services and the Flathead County Health Department.

Community concerns and preferences are outlined in this section; EPA's *Community Involvement Plan* is outlined in the next section. The action plan will explain the tools EPA Region 8 will use to share information with the community while addressing the concerns listed here. Some concerns are in the scope of EPA's work and can be addressed by EPA Region 8 working directly with the community. For concerns outside of EPA's scope, EPA Region 8 will collaborate with other federal, state and community organizations.

Community concerns and preferences are grouped into the following categories:

1. Site Cleanup Concerns
2. Water Concerns
3. Health Concerns
4. Communication and Information Preferences
5. Community Advisory Group Recommendations
6. Development and Future Land Use

Site Cleanup Concerns

Many interviewees discussed their concerns about community involvement in the cleanup process. Community members requested that city and county officials, the CFAC CLP, residents in the Aluminum City neighborhood near the Site, and the general community receive timely updates. Many community members expressed concern about whether their input would be considered in the decision-making process. Community members also asked for clarification on the potential impacts of the Site's listing on the Superfund program's National Priorities List, as well as the roles of various agencies and organizations, and noted the need for more education about site sampling activities and EPA's cleanup process.

In addition to a range of public health concerns, interviewees discussed air quality, well water safety, municipal water supply safety, wildlife and watershed impacts, and trespassing in areas near the Site as priority issues of concern. Concerns about the cleanup itself were shared as well. Community members worry about potential effects of the cleanup on surrounding areas, including the transportation of asbestos and other hazardous materials through the community. Interviewees also shared concerns about long-term monitoring of the cleanup and the continued availability of funding for these efforts if the Site was not placed on the National Priorities List.

Water Concerns

Water quality and access to water were among the most important environmental issues identified by interviewees. People noted that water quality is related to both ground water, for wells and municipal water supplies in Columbia Falls, and surface water, for downstream communities. Interviewees requested more information about which contaminants have been identified in area water supplies, their concentrations, and whether those concentrations pose a risk to public health or the environment. People also asked about potential cleanup options for area water supplies, whether wells and water infrastructure systems will need to be upgraded or replaced, and whether site contamination could impair area water supplies over the long term.

Health Concerns

Many community members asked for educational materials on site conditions and contaminants as well as recommendations for minimizing potential contact with site contamination and to better understand any risks associated with everyday activities (e.g., drinking well water, living near the Site). People also noted concerns about potential health impacts on fish and other wildlife, including winter habitat for elk near the Site.

Interviewees' experiences with the Site ranged from working on site for decades to living nearby to living in Columbia Falls and having minimal to no contact with the CFAC facility. Interviewees discussed concerns about potential health impacts but did not attribute any health-related issues or illnesses to the Site or facility operations. Some people noted that community concerns about site contamination are long standing, stretching back 20 to 30 years.

Communication and Information Preferences

Many interviewees shared their preferences for communication and receiving information. Most agreed EPA Region 8 should be transparent about its work and strive to include all community members. Community members want EPA to keep local government staff, agencies and elected officials updated on all site-related work. Many community members also requested that EPA Region 8 share information directly through community channels. Community members requested that small updates be provided as part of public comment periods during city council and county commission meetings, with major updates provided at separate public meetings hosted by EPA Region 8.

People emphasized that meeting in person and face to face works well, and recommended that EPA also present information in a variety of community locations, such as the Senior Citizens Center, the Columbia Falls Lions Club, the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls and the Kiwanis Club of Columbia Falls, the Columbia Falls Farmers' Market, the Columbia Falls Community Market, and the Columbia Falls Chamber of Commerce.

Most community members and local officials recommended that EPA share information primarily in written form and include many pictures and maps. They stressed that information should be straightforward and easy to understand – in plain language. Outside of in-person meetings, people recommended sharing written information with community members in a variety of ways – through regular mailings, social media updates and emailed newsletters. They also recommended using a variety of other formats – radio announcements, newspaper articles and television news stories on local stations – to make sure information reaches as many people as possible. Many also requested that information be readily available, both online and locally.

Community Advisory Group Recommendations

When EPA Region 8 asked about Community Advisory Group formation as one option to assist with sharing information with the larger community, many interviewees expressed interest in exploring the option further. Many emphasized that having two community organizations – the CFAC CLP and a Community Advisory Group – at the same time could be confusing, waste resources and lead to information discrepancies and inconsistencies. People recommended that if a Community Advisory Group was formed, it should be as broadly representative of community perspectives as possible.

Development and Future Land Use

Interviewees did not express strong preferences regarding the future use of the Site following

investigations and cleanup. Several asked about the viability of reusing the Site in the future, with the goal of doing something productive with the land. Community members asked that EPA cover future land use considerations as part of site information materials and presentations.

Section 5: The Community Involvement Plan

Community Involvement Plan Goals

The overall goal of EPA's community involvement program is to facilitate effective communication between communities and EPA and to provide opportunities for meaningful and active involvement by the community in the site investigation and cleanup process. EPA Region 8 will implement and/or continue to implement the community involvement activities described below. The following plan of communication and public participation activities is based on the community interviews and information gathering described earlier.

Community Involvement Plan Objectives

EPA Region 8 will strive to achieve the following objectives through its implementation of the community involvement program for the Site:

1. Share site information with the community on a timely basis and in non-technical language.
2. Encourage and publicize opportunities for community input throughout the site investigation and cleanup process.
3. Maintain site information in the community and make it accessible to interested residents and other stakeholders.
4. Increase the level of awareness and understanding of the Superfund process and specific activities involved in the process.
5. Establish and maintain two-way communication with stakeholders regarding site activities and potential effects on nearby areas.

Community Involvement Plan Tools and Activities

EPA Region 8 has identified and developed a variety of community involvement tools and activities that will be used to implement this plan. These tools and activities address how EPA Region 8 receives information from the public, shares information with the public, and promotes education and awareness about the Site and encourages public participation in the project.

Information-Sharing Tools

Mailing List

Description: Community contact list that enables EPA to share site information and updates with all interested parties.

Goal: To facilitate the distribution of site information to all parties who would like to be kept informed about the Site.

Method: EPA Region 8 has created a mailing list for the Site. EPA Region 8 will continue to coordinate with the City of Columbia Falls and Flathead County to expand and update the site mailing list on a regular basis.

Email List

Description: Electronic community contact list that enables EPA to share site information and updates with all interested parties.

Goal: To provide another way to update community members on site activities and help ensure broad community outreach and engagement.

Method: Generally, EPA Region 8 sends emails to the site email list about once a month. EPA Region 8 includes community partners such as local officials, area organizations, schools and post offices in these emails. These partners are encouraged to share the information with community members who do not have email access.

Fact Sheets

Description: Fact sheets, sometimes called site or project updates, are brief documents written in plain language, often containing user-friendly graphics, to help citizens understand technical reports, concepts and information.

Goal: To provide citizens with current, accurate, easy-to-read, easy-to-understand information about the Site.

Method: Fact sheets will continue to be mailed and emailed to all parties on the site mailing list. EPA Region 8 will prepare and distribute additional fact sheets on an as-needed basis, site milestones are achieved. In addition, copies will be available at the Site's Information Repository and from EPA site staff (see below for more information).

Information Repository

Description: The repository is a reference collection of site information containing the Administrative Record file, other site-specific information, the *Community Involvement Plan*, general Superfund process information and relevant community information.

Goal: To provide a convenient location where citizens can read and copy official documents and other pertinent information about the Site and EPA Region 8 activities.

Method: EPA Region 8 established the local repository at the Columbia Falls branch of Flathead County's ImagineIF library system. This repository is accessible to the physically

challenged, has copier facilities, and is available during normal business hours as well as some evening and weekend hours. EPA Region 8 site staff will add new documents to the repository as they become available. Interviewees also expressed interest in adding a second repository location. EPA Region 8 will coordinate further with the community to discuss this option.

Information Repository Location and Contact Information

130 6th Street West
Columbia Falls, MT 59912
(406) 892-5919
<http://imagineiflibraries.org/about-us>

Maps and Visual Aids

Description: Maps and visual aids help people understand site characteristics and surroundings.

Goal: To communicate complex site-related issues effectively to the community.

Method: EPA Region 8 will regularly use maps, photographs, and other visual aids in documents and fact sheets, at public sessions, and in online site resources.

Media Distribution / Media Events

Description: Local media enable EPA to reach the local community quickly and effectively and also to reinforce key messages and information over time.

Goal: To reach a diverse community audience and communicate complex site-related issues effectively to site stakeholders.

Method: EPA Region 8 will coordinate with the City of Columbia Falls and Flathead County and provide updates and information to local newspapers and radio and television stations and encourage them to further distribute site-related information on a regular basis.

EPA Region 8 will use the following media channels for outreach:

Newspaper Communication

Daily Inter Lake
Flathead Beacon
Hungry Horse News

Television Communication

KCFW and KECI – NBC Montana

KPAX – CBS Channel 8
KTMF – ABC Fox Montana

Radio Communication

KGEZ 600 AM
KERR 750 AM
KJJR 880 AM
KOFI 1180 AM

KBBZ 98.5 FM
KHNK 95.9 FM
KDBR 106.3 FM
KUKL 90.1 FM

EPA Website

Description: Online site resources enable people to access current site information, as well as key site documents, contact information and information updates.

Goal: To provide key resources for searching and listing both general and specific information about Superfund and site-related issues.

Method: EPA Region 8 will continue to coordinate with the City of Columbia Falls and Flathead County to determine the most appropriate approach to providing the community with online resources for the Site.

Existing online resources available from EPA include:

- Site status summary page:
<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0800392>.
- Information about the national Superfund program: <http://www.epa.gov/Superfund>.
- Information about the EPA Region 8: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-8-mountains-and-plains>.

Community Involvement Activities

Community Meetings

Description: Many interviewees recommended that EPA host informational gatherings, especially when more time is needed for deep engagement with community members.

Goal: To update the community on site developments and address community questions, concerns, ideas and comments. These sessions and meetings also provide EPA with feedback

from the community.

Method: EPA Region 8 will provide at least two weeks of notice for all scheduled meetings. EPA Region 8 will coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls as well as MDEQ and other agencies to schedule, prepare for and attend all announced meetings. EPA site staff will attend the meetings.

Depending on the topics to be discussed, the following formats will be considered:

- *Meetings and Open Houses* – larger community meetings that may include EPA presentations, information presented on posters, and time for the community to ask questions and give feedback.
- *Small Venue Meetings and Focus Groups* – smaller and more informal gatherings focusing on a particular topic or group interest.
- *Listening Sessions* – opportunities for community members to share their thoughts and concerns with EPA representatives.
- *Workshops and Facilitated Discussions* – facilitated meetings designed to answer specific questions or address specific community concerns.

EPA will send meeting notices for these gatherings to the email list, mailing list, community partners, newspapers, and radio and television stations as appropriate. Potential meeting locations identified include Columbia Falls City Hall, the Columbia Falls High School theater, the Columbia Falls Junior High School cafetorium, North Valley Community Center and The Coop, home of the Columbia Falls Community Market.

Community Advisory Group Meetings

Description: A Community Advisory Group (CAG) is made up of representatives of diverse community interests. A CAG can assist EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site. It offers EPA a unique opportunity to hear – and seriously consider – community cleanup preferences for cleanup and remediation.

Goal: To provide a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process.

Method: Many interviewees expressed interest in Community Advisory Group formation as a potential option to help facilitate EPA communication with the community. With the Site's listing on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in September 2016, EPA Region 8 could assist with CAG development, providing administrative support on issues relevant to the Superfund cleanup and decision-making process. EPA Region 8 will coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls regarding potential CAG formation.

For more information on Community Advisory Groups and the Superfund program:
<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/community-advisory-groups>.

Coordination with Local Governments and State Agencies

Description: Local governments and state agencies are important partners that coordinate with EPA to ensure the protection of human health and the environment at Superfund sites.

Goal: EPA's goal is to ensure that local government officials and agencies are informed of project activities that may occur in their jurisdiction and to help minimize the impacts of project activities.

Method: EPA Region 8 will continue to coordinate with Flathead County, the City of Columbia Falls, the Flathead County Health Department, MDEQ, the Montana Department of Health & Public Services, and other relevant parties to keep them informed, receive their feedback and understand their concerns.

Community Organization Interaction

Description: EPA will coordinate with and, upon request, attend meetings of community organizations such as the Senior Citizens Center, the Columbia Falls Lions Club, the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls and the Kiwanis Club of Columbia Falls, the Columbia Falls Chamber of Commerce, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Goal: Such interaction helps ensure that members of these organizations receive the information they need and that EPA receives their input and understands their concerns. Interaction with stakeholder groups also can extend EPA's outreach by sharing EPA public service announcements, site updates, and other information with their members and constituents.

Method: EPA will coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls to identify and communicate with any additional stakeholder groups that have identified the Site as a focus of their organization.

Informal Discussions

Description: Informal discussions with EPA staff are among the ways that the public and EPA can communicate about a project.

Goal: To help keep community members informed about the Site, while providing EPA Region 8 with feedback about site activities and the community's opinions.

Method: EPA Region 8 will continue to maintain a presence in the community through informal visits to talk with local residents. Informal comments can be offered at any time. Written comments may be submitted via email or mail to site manager Mike Cirian at cirian.mike@epa.gov | 108 East 9th Street, Libby, MT 59923 or to community involvement coordinator Robert Moler at moler.robert@epa.gov | 10 West 15th Street, Suite 3200, Helena, MT 59626. Please see Appendix A for additional contact information.

Technical Assistance Programs

Description: Technical assistance refers to the provision of services focused on increasing community understanding of the science, regulations and policy related to environmental issues and EPA actions. To support healthy communities and strengthen environmental protection, EPA works closely with communities to make sure they have the technical help they need. Sometimes, a community may need more help to fully understand local environmental issues and participate in decision-making.

Goal: To help people better understand technical site-related issues related to a cleanup and key considerations for a site's future use. With this assistance, communities are then in a better position to share their concerns and priorities with EPA.

Method: EPA provides assistance to communities through a variety of technical assistance resources and tools, listed below.

Technical Assistance Needs Assessment (TANA) Tool

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-needs-assessments-tanas>

This process identifies additional support that a community may require in order to understand technical information and participate meaningfully in the Superfund decision-making process. A TANA helps EPA determine what technical assistance resources and information the Agency can provide to meet community needs.

Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-services-communities-tasc-program>

This program provides services through a national EPA contract. Under the contract, a contractor provides scientists, engineers and other professionals to review and explain information to communities. TASC services are determined on a project-specific basis and provided at no cost to communities.

Partners in Technical Assistance Program (PTAP)

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/partners-technical-assistance-program-ptap>

Colleges and universities provide voluntary technical assistance to communities through this program.

Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-grant-tag-program>

TAGs are awarded to non-profit incorporated community groups. With TAG funding, community groups can contract with independent technical advisors to interpret and help the community understand technical information about their site. The TAG recipient group is responsible for managing their grant funds and contributing a 20 percent award match. Most groups meet this requirement through in-kind contributions such as

volunteer hours toward grant-related activities.

Technical Assistance Plan (TAP)

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-plan-tap>

A TAP is funded by potentially responsible parties through provisions in a negotiated settlement agreement. A TAP enables community groups to retain the services of an independent technical advisor and to provide resources for a community group to help other community members learn about site decisions.

Job Training Programs

Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-epas-environmental-workforce-development-and-job-training-program>

Description: Since 1998, EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program has helped put people to work, building a skilled environmental workforce across the country. Each year, EPA awards competitive grant funding to nonprofit organizations and other eligible entities in communities across the nation to recruit, train and place unemployed individuals, including low-income and minority residents of solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities, for a wide range of environmental careers.

Goal: To help build a skilled workforce in communities where EPA brownfields assessment and cleanup activities are taking place. Rather than seeing local jobs filled by contractors from distant cities, EPA created its environmental job training program to offer an opportunity for unemployed residents historically affected by environmental pollution, economic disinvestment and brownfields to gain the skills and certifications needed to secure local cleanup work in their communities.

Method: Grant recipients are provided the flexibility to design training curricula that meet local employers' hiring needs. Through comprehensive, cross-disciplinary environmental training, graduates develop wider skill sets that increase their likelihood of obtaining full-time, sustained careers that advance social, economic and environmental betterment. Examples of the types of training provided include OSHA 40-hour hazardous waste operations and emergency response, Superfund and brownfields site-specific assessment and cleanup, environmental health and chemical safety, ecological restoration, wastewater treatment facility operations and stormwater management, green infrastructure installation and maintenance, geographic information systems, construction and demolition debris recycling, and solar panel and wind turbine installation.

Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI)

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative>

Description: SuperJTI is a job readiness program that provides training and employment opportunities for people living in communities affected by Superfund sites. Many of

these areas are environmental justice communities – historically under-represented minority and low-income neighborhoods and areas burdened with significant environmental challenges.

Goal: To help these communities develop job opportunities that remain long after a Superfund site has been cleaned up.

Method: SuperJTI combines classroom instruction with hands-on training exercises for each participant. SuperJTI benefits communities by:

- Increasing understanding of site conditions and cleanup efforts.
- Providing individuals with marketable skills that enhance employment potential.
- Enabling community members to play active roles in the protection and restoration of their neighborhoods.
- Providing assistance with job placement.

EPA offers SuperJTI training through its Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) contract, which provides independent educational and technical assistance to communities affected by Superfund sites.

Environmental Justice Resources

Description: Environmental justice means that all communities overburdened by pollution – particularly minority, low income and tribal communities – deserve the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, equal access to the federal decision-making process, and a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.

Goal: The primary purpose of EPA’s environmental justice grant programs is to support and empower communities as they develop and implement solutions that significantly address environmental and/or public health issues at the local level.

Method: EPA provides assistance to communities through a variety of environmental justice resources and tools, listed below.

Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) Cooperative Agreement Program

<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-cooperative-agreement-0>

The CPS program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships to help them understand and address environmental and public health concerns in their communities.

Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-small-grants-program>

EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks.

Other Environmental Justice-Related Funding Opportunities

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance>

Section 6: The Superfund Process

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Appendix A: Contacts

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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Community Involvement Coordinator
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moler.robert@epa.gov

Mike Cirian, PE

Site Manager
EPA Region 8
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Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation

Michael Durglo, Jr.

Director of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 278
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Blackfeet Nation

Contact TBD

Blackfeet Environmental Office
62 Hospital Road
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Browning, Montana 59417
(406) 338-7421

Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

Contact TBD

Kalispell Office
655 Timberwolf, Suite #3
Kalispell, MT 59901

Montana Department of Health & Public Services

Kalispell Field Office

121 Financial Drive, Suite A
Kalispell, MT 59901
hhshcsopaflathead@mt.gov

Flathead County

Pamela Holmquist

Chairman, Flathead County Commission
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City of Columbia Falls

Susan Nicosia

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Flathead County Health Department

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Other Agencies / Departments / Organizations

Contacts TBD

Appendix B: Fact Sheets

Appendix C: Community Involvement Plan Questionnaire

Appendix D: Community Involvement Requirements in the Superfund Process

Other Appendices TBD